

St Marys Aged Care

TITLE:	Complaints Management Policy	POLICY NO.	GOV-Complaints-Policy
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VERSION:	2025/01
EFFECTIVE DATE:	November 2025
REVIEW DATE:	November 2026
DISTRIBUTION:	All Staff
POLICY CONTEXT:	Quality Standard Outcomes/Actions: 2.6.1, 2.6.2, 2.6.3, 2.6.4
RELATED POLICIES:	GOV-Whistleblower-Policy: <i>Whistleblower Policy</i>
RELATED PROCEDURES:	GOV-Complaints-Procedure: <i>Complaints Management Procedure</i> CLIN-Deterioration-ASK-Procedure-11: <i>Escalation of Concerns - ASK</i>
APPROVED BY:	DOC

PURPOSE

St Marys Aged Care (SMAC) upholds that all residents, their families, carers, advocates, and any other relevant stakeholders have a right to make a complaint about any aspect of the service, or staff, and for it to be acknowledged appropriately and resolved in a timely manner.

All complaints will be treated with respect and handled seriously, with due diligence and procedural fairness.

SMAC has a system in place that encourages and enables residents and others to make complaints, and for those complaints to be resolved, where possible, by the organisation.

SMAC is committed to meeting its obligations and responsibilities under the Aged Care Act 2024, and the Aged Care Rules; and to respecting the statement of rights as they apply to its residents.

PRINCIPLES

Definitions -

A complaint is any situation in which a resident, or someone acting on behalf of the resident, tells an organisation that they are dissatisfied with:

The way in which the service has been delivered;

or

An aspect of the standards, practices or policies of the organisation.

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For SMAC to be accountable, it must facilitate feedback and respond appropriately to any complaints that it receives.

SMAC views complaints as just one part of its resident feedback system, so that the focus is on gathering feedback on a continuous basis, rather than just 'waiting for complaints'.

The goal is to promote an organisational culture which actively encourages people to make complaints, as they can be an important source of data about the quality of services and where improvements can be made.

Policy principles –

SMAC's complaints management policy and procedure will:

- Be person-centred.
- Be fair and equitable.
- Be objective and impartial.
- Be neutral and non-judgemental.
- Be based on natural justice.
- Be confidential.
- Be timely, and use an open disclosure process.
- Follow due process (procedural fairness).
- Create an environment of openness and trust, reassuring residents/their representatives, staff, and other stakeholders that no reprisals or adverse treatment will occur if they make a complaint.
- Demonstrate a balanced approach.
- Be understood by all residents/their representatives.
- Be made available throughout the organisation.
- Be understood by all staff as part of their induction and ongoing training.
- Allow for residents/their representatives to register complaints in ways that are comfortable, anonymous where the complainant wishes, and appropriate (for example, not having to give the complaint to a staff person that they may be complaining about; ensuring that language or literacy is not a barrier, and supporting access to advocates as needed).

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- Have a clear and accessible procedure, which identifies the people who will be responsible for processing and dealing with the issue.
- Set out procedures for communication with complainants and others affected by the complaint.
- Have set time frames for resolution.
- Include avenues for appeals, both internal and external.
- Have a method for keeping a record of complaints and their resolutions, and procedures governing access to these records.
- Collect data to enable analysis, report outcomes to the governing body, residents/their representatives, staff and other stakeholders, and use information to strengthen continuous improvement.
- Be reviewed and updated periodically based on feedback from stakeholders and best practice principles.

Quality improvement –

The senior clinical team and management team will regularly review the complaints management policy and procedure to make sure it works well and seek ways to improve it. This will be done via:

- Review of resident progress notes and care plans.
- Review of information from feedback and complaints.
- Analysis of risk and incident data.
- Analysis of staff performance and how well they are using the complaints management policy and procedure.
- Review of the policy and procedures.
- Discussions with residents and their representatives; asking them if they feel heard and if their complaints have been resolved appropriately and in a timely manner.
- Analysis of meeting minutes.

Related education –

- Privacy and dignity.
- Customer service within aged care.
- Non-negotiables.
- Maintaining standards for AINs.
- Strengthened quality standards.
- Standard of care.
- SIRS.
- Code of conduct.
- Cultural awareness and diversity.

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- Managing difficult situations.
- Incident reports.

End of Document

RELATED DOCUMENTS/EVIDENCE-BASE
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Australian Government. Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (2025). *Better practice guide to complaints handling in aged care services*.

https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/sites/default/files/media/better_practice_guide_to_complaints_handling_in_aged_care_services_v4.pdf

Australian Government. Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (2024). *Strengthened Quality Standards*.

<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/providers/quality-standards/strengthened-quality-standards>

BNG. NGO Services Online (2025). *Info Sheet: Complaints Management*.

https://bngspp.s3.amazonaws.com/live/files/dmfile/6.1.4_Info_Complaints_Management1.pdf
